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New Evidence of Politics Found in Gableman Burnett County Judicial Appointment

*No Application File, Records of Interview Found for Gableman;
Contributions from Gableman: \$2,500, From Finalists Bypassed by McCallum: \$0*

Milwaukee – Recommendation letters obtained from the formal applications of candidates for the Burnett County Circuit Court judgeship former Republican Scott McCallum bypassed to appoint current Wisconsin Supreme Court candidate and McCallum donor and fundraiser Mike Gableman include numerous references to the political consequences of selecting certain candidates.

Gableman also donated, according to Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, \$2,500 in two separate contributions to McCallum's campaign. Neither of the commission's chosen finalists, Burnett County District Attorney Ken Kutz nor Polk County District Attorney Mark Biller made any contributions to McCallum.

"Every new piece of evidence shows partisan politics are a primary reason Mike Gableman got his job," said Scot Ross, Executive Director of One Wisconsin Now. "These letters urge Governor McCallum that the other two finalists would have been bad for the Republican Party. They certainly contributed less to his campaign account than Gableman did."

No such records, including a formal application for the Burnett County position, have been located for Gableman, who bypassed the selected finalists from the Governor's own Judicial Advisory Selection Committee. Choosing Gableman, McCallum ignored his own Executive Orders creating the selection committee process.

When [WKOW-TV](#) Friday asked McCallum "whether there were any other occasions when he ignored the selection committee and filled a judicial vacancy independent of the process, he did not cite any."

As reported Friday, documents obtained by One Wisconsin Now prove questionable claims Gableman's campaign made to the [Wisconsin State Journal](#) that Gableman had no knowledge of the judicial selection process. Phone records show [Gableman called James Troupis](#), McCallum's Judicial Selection Committee Chair, July 19, 2002, one month before McCallum announced his selection of Gableman.

James Troupis, the committee chair, also acknowledged in Friday's *State Journal* article that politics played a role in judicial selections at the time. "There's a reality there -- (as a judge) you are going to have to run for election," Troupis said.

(MORE)

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One of the recommendation letters obtained by One Wisconsin Now cites Kutz as previously having run on the Democratic ticket. “I personally do not think either Mr. Biller or Mr. Kutz will be positive for the Republican Party of Wisconsin, plus the appointment of either individual could have a potential negative effect on the reelection campaign of [then Republican] Representative Mark Pettis,” the letter continues. Its author also mentions he had spoken to the Governor at a fundraiser for Pettis on June 14, two weeks prior to McCallum’s interview with the finalist.

“Since there’s no record of Gableman’s application, interview or personal recommendations and no independent panel reviewed his qualifications, how did McCallum decide on Mike Gableman?” asked Ross. “Did he ever ask Gableman about his experience, or why he abruptly resigned as Ashland County District Attorney and took a much lower-paying bureaucratic job on the other side of the state?”

Documents from the State Historical Society showed McCallum and Gableman met on more than one occasion in the months preceding Gableman’s selection. Gableman, who served as a [McCallum fundraiser during the selection process](#), also organized a meeting at the Governor’s residence with officers in the Republican Party of Ashland County, where Gableman was Republican Party Chair.

Documents obtained by One Wisconsin Now from the State Historical Society and through open records requests are available at: <http://www.onewisconsinnow.org/page/content/suspiciousappointment>.

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